

# Slaugham Parish Council



## The Basics

### What is a Parish Council?

- Parish Councils are the first tier of local government and the closest to the community they serve.
- As a tier of local government they are elected bodies, with discretionary powers and rights laid down by Parliament to represent their communities and provide services for them.
- All local authorities are constituted in the same way with Councillors elected by the local government electorate and a Chairman, who must be one of them.
- Local Councils vary in size and capacity; many are very small, representing a few hundred people, others represent communities of over 30,000 people with budgets over £1m and expenditure and staffing levels per head of population similar to a small District Council.
- A Local Council is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a name. It comprises a Chairman, and Councillors. Local Councillors are often referred to as "Members". The number of Councillors are fixed by the District Council.





# Slaugham Parish Council

## County Councils



## How it works and who does what?

### County Councils West Sussex County Council (WSCC)

These are responsible for services across the whole of a county, like:

- education
- transport
- planning
- fire and public safety
- social care
- libraries
- waste management
- trading standards
- Highways

### District, borough and city councils, Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC)

These cover a smaller area than county councils. They're usually responsible for services like:

- rubbish collection
- recycling
- Council Tax collections
- housing
- planning applications
- Environmental Issues

### Parish, community and town councils

These operate at a level below district and borough councils and in some cases, unitary authorities.

They're elected and can help on a number of local issues, like providing:

- allotments
- public clocks
- bus shelters
- community centres
- play areas and play equipment
- grants to help local organisations
- consultation on neighbourhood planning

They also have the power to issue fixed penalty fines for things like:

- litter
- graffiti
- fly posting
- dog offences



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## Slaugham Parish Council

- ❖ Slaugham Parish Council (SPC) is one Parish, four Villages, Handcross, Warninglid, Slaugham and Pease Pottage.
- ❖ It is made up of 13 Councillors, 10 seats for Handcross and Pease Pottage and 3 for Slaugham and Warninglid.
- ❖ Elects a Chairman and a Vice Chairman
- ❖ Employs a Parish Clerk and two litter pickers
- ❖ Sets its own precept, which is collected through Council Tax
- ❖ Can apply for loans and grants
- ❖ Have a wide range of powers under different acts of Parliament. Most of these powers are discretionary, i.e. the Council may do something, rather than it must do something.
- ❖ is limited in its responsibilities and duties
- ❖ The exercise of these powers may be subject to various consents, from, for example, the owner of land or another public body such as the highways authority.
- ❖ Almost all Local Council powers are concurrent with those of the District Council, i.e. the power may be exercised by either the Parish/Town Council or the District Council.



# Slaugham Parish Council



## What does a Parish Council have to do?

There are certain obligations which by law a Local Council must fulfil. For example:

- It must hold an annual meeting;
- It must hold at least three other meetings a year;
- It must appoint such officers as it believes necessary for the proper discharge of its functions  
(this may be a Councillor unpaid, but in common practice is a Clerk and/or Treasurer);
- It must make Standing Orders for the supply of goods and services to the Council.

The arrangements for meetings and proceedings of Local Councils are set out in Part II of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972, as supplemented by any standing orders adopted by a Council.

There is a list of Parish Council Powers with statutory provisions located on the Parish Council Toolkit produced by NALC (National Association of Local Councils)





# Slaugham Parish Council



## What does the Parish Council currently do?

- ✓ Holds a monthly meeting (except August & December)
- ✓ Holds an Annual General Meeting and an Annual Parish Meeting
- ✓ Has five adopted Committees
  - ✓ Finance and Policy
  - ✓ Planning
  - ✓ Recreation
  - ✓ Neighbourhood Planning
  - ✓ Community Halls
- ✓ Has management representatives for the Community Centres
- ✓ Supports Local Organisations where it can
- ✓ Maintains and pays for Street Lighting, Litter, Grit and Dog Bins, Common Land, Trees, recreation ground maintenance, mobile freighter refuse collection, community halls.





# Slaugham Parish Council



## What does the Parish Council currently do?

- Track and consult on local planning applications to the District Council
- Refer to local neighbourhood plan policies
- Works with the District Councils concerning infrastructure projects and funding
- Operates a winter management plan, maintains all grit bins across the four villages
- Owns and maintains the village greens, common land, sports Pavilions and recreation grounds
- Maintain and hires the facilities at Handcross and Pease Pottage community facilities

*The range of services and amenities provided by Local Councils varies enormously. Many provide public seats and shelters, litter bins and notice boards. Some provide recreation grounds, public halls, cemeteries, allotments and swimming pools. All play an important role in maintaining and improving local services and facilities, supporting local voluntary organisations and activities and influencing and lobbying on local development*





# Slaugham Parish Council



## What would I have to do?

As a member of Council you would need to abide by the following:

- You are required to attend meetings that you are summoned to. Failure to do so can only be excused if apologies are sent in advance to the Clerk, or can result in expulsion.
- You are required to sign and abide by the by the Code of Conduct and National Rules as a member of Council. These can be onerous and failure to act appropriately can lead to a disciplinary hearing and action by the District Council.
- Further information is available from the [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk) website or alternatively please contact a member of Council who will be happy to assist.
- You would be expected to join one or more of the Committees and to add value to the activities of the Parish Council. Allocation of tasks is usually by choice!





# Slaugham Parish Council



## Committees

Below is a list of the adopted committees, with a brief précis of their role within Council. There are sub/working groups under these, that deal with day to day functions of the Council

### ♠ Finance & Policy

To exercise general supervision and control over the finances and assets of the Council and to arrange for the proper auditing of all accounts of the Council

### ♠ Recreation

To be responsible for the proper regulation and management of the Council's parks, recreation grounds, woodlands, open spaces set aside for purposes of leisure, recreation or bio-diversity and picnic grounds and amenities areas

### ♠ Planning

To consider all planning applications relating to the Parish and to comment thereon to the District Council. To authorise where appropriate the lodging or support for appeals arising out of decisions in respect to planning applications within the Parish.

### ♠ Community Halls

To review the existing and new facilities within the Parish as deemed appropriate by the committee.

### ♠ Neighbourhood Plan

To develop a Neighbourhood Plan, for a sustainable and vibrant thriving rural community, driven by the needs and aspirations of the people in Slaugham Parish.

When facilities fall outside the Parish Council control we work closely with other organisations, e.g., maintenance of the Recreation Ground by Mid Sussex District Council, County Council for Highways and Footpaths.





# Slaugham Parish Council



## ELECTIONS 2019 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Page 1

### **Who posts the Notice of Election?**

The Clerk

### **When can nomination papers be submitted?**

Nomination papers can be submitted from the date stated on the notice of election up to 4pm on the nineteenth working day before the election (3rd April). It must be the original signed documents that are submitted.

### **Who delivers the nomination papers?**

The candidate or candidate's agent NOT the clerk

### **Can candidates collect their own nomination packs from the District Council?**

Yes

### **My parish is warded. Can I stand for election on more than one ward?**

No. The guidance says that if you are validly nominated in more than one ward within the same parish you must withdraw from all wards but one by 4pm on the 19th working day before the poll. If you do not, then you will be deemed to have withdrawn from all wards.

### **If a parish/town council has chosen to be non-political in the past and wishes to change does this**

#### **need to be approved by resolution?**

No – this is not a decision that can be made by a council, it cannot do anything to stop someone with political inclination from standing.

### **Can a spouse/relative nominate?**

Yes, anyone can nominate providing they are on the Electoral Roll

### **Do existing councillors have to apply to stand?**

Yes

### **What happens if there is a general election?**

All elections can happen on the same day if necessary

### **Can a clerk canvas for prospective councillors?**

The Clerk can advertise generally but not target specific candidates

### **If there are the same number of candidates as vacancies does the Council still have to hold an election?**

Yes, but it will be uncontested and valid candidates returned unopposed

### **If a candidate is nominated for a specific ward can they be moved to another ward if there are not enough candidates for that ward?**

No

### **Are prospective councillors given all the information they need?**

Yes, they will be given a pack which includes a nomination form and all the information that they require



# Slaugham Parish Council



## ELECTIONS 2019 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Page 2

### **Is it ok for Clerks to ask current councillors who will be re-standing?**

Yes - but they don't have to tell you!

### **Can you preclude a candidate?**

No, provided the nomination is accepted by the Returning Officer a person may stand

### **Should Clerks send packs to existing councillors?**

Yes, the packs will not automatically be sent to existing councillors

### **Who has to prove whether a candidate is eligible to stand?**

The candidate

### **When can we hold our annual meeting of the council?**

The law requires annual meetings to be held on or within 14 days of the new council taking office therefore the earliest date the meeting may take place is Monday 13th May (allowing for 3 clear days notice) and the latest is Tuesday 21st May.

### **When does a councillor have to complete their Declaration of Acceptance?**

The declaration must be delivered before or at the first meeting after the election (the annual council meeting) or, if permitted by the council at that meeting, at a later meeting fixed by the council. If a councillor fails to deliver the declaration at the due time, he or she will be unable to take their seat.

### **When does a councillor have to complete their Register of Interests?**

Every member is required to complete a register of disclosable pecuniary interests. Under the council's Code of Conduct (and the law) this register must be completed as soon as possible after election and no later than 28 days after taking office.

### **Can a candidate be reimbursed expenses?**

No, never. A declaration of election expenses must be delivered to the Returning Officer. If a councillor fails to deliver the required information, he or she may be disqualified. If no expenses have been incurred councillors still need to submit a "nil" return.

### **What are candidates likely to incur expenses for?**

Prints & promotional material, travel - candidates **MUST** submit declaration of expenses forms following elections even if the figure is zero

### **When does the purdah period start?**

For the elections on 2 May 2019, the latest date the pre-election period could start is 26 March 2019 – please check with your District Council the exact date that Purdah commences in your district.

### **Does Purdah need to be observed in a non-political Council?**

Yes



# Slaugham Parish Council



## ELECTIONS 2019 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Page 3

### **Can our Neighbourhood Planning Group continue to work on our Neighbourhood Plan during Purdah?**

Neighbourhood Planning is an activity that cannot 'shut down' during electoral purdah restrictions, but extra care should be taken during this time of heightened sensitivity. The guidance provided by the Local Government Association says a council can continue to discharge normal council business (including determining planning applications, even if they are controversial).

### **Can we hold our Annual Parish Meeting (APM) during purdah?**

The APM is not a council meeting but often involves the use of council resources to run it, we do not recommend that it takes place during Purdah.

### **Should I stop my District Council attending our parish council meeting during Purdah?**

The general rule is that it is "business as usual". However, councils should be cautious about any attempt by councillors to use the meeting as a platform to promote themselves.

### **Can I mention any specific councillors in reports during Purdah?**

No, this is not recommended

### **Is it ok to include a report from the Mayor, Chairman or councillors in the parish magazine during Purdah?**

No, this is not recommended

### **Can the Council hold events during Purdah?**

Yes, providing there is no political agenda

### **If more than one candidate is standing for Co-option can the council ask the candidate to leave the room while the vote takes place?**

No – the Council must be transparent

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### **Further information can be found on the FAQ page provided by the Local Government Association**

here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah/frequently-asked-questions>